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For Immediate Release
April 26, 2006

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Sen. Cassis testifies on her “Good Builders” legislation

LANSING—State Sen. Nancy Cassis testified today before the Economic Development, Small Business and Regulatory Reform Committee on legislation she sponsored that will protect and advance the professionalism, ethics, and integrity of the residential building industry while giving consumers confidence in builders.

Senate Bills 631 and 632, known as the “Good Builders” measure, will provide several mechanisms to strengthen the industry.

“This legislation builds confidence and trust in builders by ensuring their proper licensing and education as well as enforcing licensing and penalties for those who don’t reach industry standards,” said Cassis, R-Novi. “‘Good Builders’ has been one and a half years in the making, and I’m delighted to see the committee now considering it.”

The bills give the state the authority to go after unlicensed builders. The legislation also creates the Builder Enforcement Fund in the Michigan Department of Treasury. Each licensee will pay a \$30 one-time fee to this fund for the purpose of prosecuting unlicensed builder activity. After startup of the fund, civil fines collected from prosecuting unlicensed builders will continue to fund this program.

“This legislation is vital for young people and their families buying their first home, or for senior citizens purchasing a new home on a fixed budget,” said Cassis. “The purchase of a home is the biggest investment people ever make. We want them to have the assurance that they won’t be undermined by bad apples who aren’t licensed for residential building or those builders who do shoddy, substandard workmanship.”

Builders convicted of a misdemeanor enacted by the legislation could face up to a year in jail and \$25,000 in fines. The bills also provide for civil fines up to \$25,000. In addition, the legislation:

- Requires that all licensees have continuing education for the first 6 years after initial licensure. Should a violation occur the department could require up to 18 hours of continuing education from the builder;
- Creates a residential builders’ and maintenance and alteration contractors’ board;
- Requires the Department of Treasury to post on its website any complaints against licensees (final orders) within 30 days after the determination by the board; and
- Requires the department to post annually on its website the number of final orders.

“The residential building industry has been sustaining the economy nationwide, especially here in Michigan,” said Cassis. “Builders also have an investment—an investment in maintaining a reputation for high standards, ethics, integrity, and professionalism. This legislation helps ensure that good builders will maintain that reputation by weeding out the bad actors.”

The legislation will be brought up for a vote at a future meeting of the committee.

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